**Consultation on the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill**

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<th>Evidence submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill</th>
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**About you**

Individual

1. **The Bill’s general principles**

1.1 **Do you support the principles of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill?**

— Partly

1.2 **Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)*

I am not an advocate of physical punishment as a way of bringing children up but do not support the criminalising of smacking as I do not believe the law should be brought into this sensitive subject area. The law should be used sparingly as it is a heavy handed instrument with huge resource implications if it is to be applied effectively and has lots of unintended consequences.

1.3 **Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)*

No I do not. I sympathise with what the Bill is seeking to achieve but believe other methods of persuasion and demonstration, encouragement and support should be used to help parents rather than try to force them to accept this.
2 The Bill’s implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I could write a tome about barriers and very negative unintended consequences which will arise if this is put into legislative form and criminal sanctions are applied. The financial costs to the judicial system, scarce police resources and social workers etc will be enormous apart from many other effects.

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

A way forward may be to survey the types of parents who think smacking is justifiable and those who actually smack (without being punitive and judgemental about it). I suspect there will be many families who just cannot cope with parenting and have low self esteem issues themselves. Other groups will be many ethnic minorities who have a distinct attitude to authoritative parenting. Certain Christian groups also will fight to the death to not have the state interfering in how they parent their children (with some good reasons when we look at totalitarian states and ideologies).

I think it is a no win scenario and will only cause antagonism, resistance and fragmentation in Welsh society.

Of equal if not more concern to me is emotional abuse of children which flies under the radar and destroys any self esteem. How does the Welsh Assembly intend to deal with this issue—further criminalisation?

3 Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

See comments on question 2

4 Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum)? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)
See comments under two. I could go on and on about consequences and implications but do not have the time at the moment and you have probably heard many of them already in other submissions.

5 Other considerations

5.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I am a practicing Christian myself and understand where the different groups, Christian and non-Christian are coming from. I can appreciate their points of view. I seldom smacked when I was parenting my three children but may just have been fortunate that my children did not have serious issues of rebellion until teenage hood and then it is so obviously detrimental to hit that other methods have to be developed. I hit my teenage daughter once under severe provocation and she hit me back (a lot harder than I hit her!), which made me realise how stupid, ineffective and harmful it was!

My attitudes to smacking have been evolving over the past year as this debate has gone on. I am now more firmly of the opinion that it is not a good thing to do but I do not think criminalisation is a positive way forward to change public and parental opinions about it. I would like to see a positive, encouraging healthy parenting campaign rather than what looks like a state attack on parents.